RA
412.3
.M33
no.5
(2000:June)



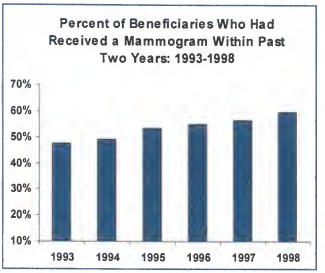
Information and Methods Group, OSP June 2000 Issue No. 5

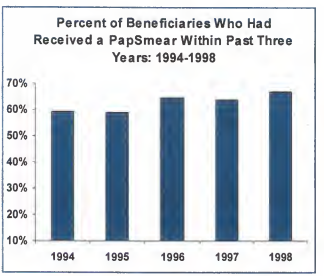
# Use of Mammography and Pap Smear Benefits in 1998

*Mammography and pap smears have been covered by Medicare, to some extent, since 1991. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA), however, increased coverage of these services. In January 1998, Medicare began covering an annual mammogram for women over 40 and a pap smear every three years for all beneficiaries (annually for some). This Profile looks at mammography and pap smear rates for noninstitutionalized beneficiaries through 1998, and can be used as a benchmark for measuring future increases resulting from the BBA.*

In 1998, nearly 60 percent of female beneficiaries reported having had a mammogram within the past two years. This was a 12 percentage point increase from 1993 when less than half of beneficiaries reported having had a mammogram during the past two years. The Department of Health and Human Services' "Healthy People 2000" goal was a 60 percent bi-annual mammography rate, which appears to have been achieved. While the 2000 goal focused on a bi-annual rate, current recommendations encourage a mammogram every one to two years. Under the BBA legislation an annual mammogram is covered for beneficiaries over age 40. In 1998, 47 percent of those beneficiaries had a mammogram.

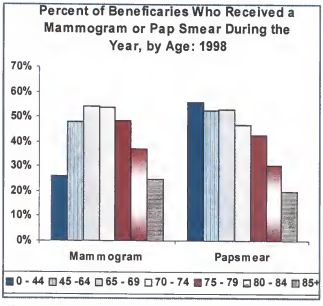
The BBA also covers a pap smear every three years. In 1998 two-thirds of beneficiaries reported having had a pap smear within the past three years. This was a seven percentage point increase from the three year rate in 1994.



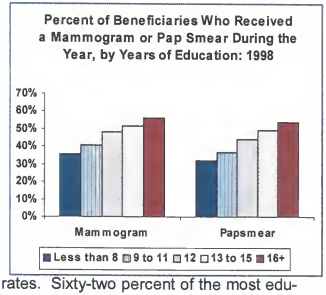



## Service use in 1998:

Beneficiaries between the ages of 65 and 74 were much more likely to have mammograms and pap smears than older beneficiaries. The rate of use for these services among the aged population declines dramatically in the oldest age groups. Less than one-third of beneficiaries over the age of 80 had a mammogram or pap smear in 1998.




Education is also correlated with mammography and pap smear rates. More than half of beneficiaries with the most education had mammograms and pap smears in 1998 versus one-third of beneficiaries with eight or less years of education. This holds true across all age groups. Among the age group most likely to get mammograms--those aged 65 to 69--57 percent of beneficiaries with 13 or more years of education had a mammogram, versus 45 percent of those with eight or less years of education. Among the age groups least likely to get mammograms--those over 80--39 percent of those with 13 or more years of education had a mammogram while 25 percent of those with eight or less years of education reported having a mammogram.




The same pattern is evident in pap smear rates. Sixty-two percent of the most educated beneficiaries under age 45 (the age group most likely to have a pap smear) received pap smears while 47 percent of beneficiaries with less than eight years of education had a pap smear in 1998.

In 1998, mammography and pap smear rates showed relatively little difference across racial and ethnic groups. Forty-seven percent of white beneficiaries and 43 percent of African-American and Hispanic beneficiaries had mammograms. Annual pap smear rates ranged between 41 and 43 percent for all races.

**This issue of *MCBS Profiles* by: Lauren Murray, Michael Slater, and Frank Eppig**

CMS LIBRARY
3 8095 00016720 1